Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A branching device for at least one electric line, the branching device comprising:

a housing comprising a housing base section and a housing upper section to be connected with each other;

at least one electrically conducting wire terminal that provides a branching contact [[,]] is accommodated in a holder, and includes contact lips with cutting edges for cutting through insulation of a wire to be connected to the wire terminal;

wherein [[:]] the at least one wire terminal further includes at least one connecting lug, ~~which protrudes above the holder and~~ a through-channel for the uninterrupted passage of the wire, and at least one holding-down clamp which holds the wires in the through-channel of the wire terminal and which is inserted in the housing;

at least one of the contact lips is located diagonally to the through-channel so that the tip of the edge of the contact lip protrudes into the through-channel;

at least one of the contact lips is flexible in a direction pointing away from the through-channel; and

the ~~at least one~~ holding-down clamp ~~holds the wires in the through-channel of the wire terminals and~~ exhibits a transverse plate that closes off the through-channel and has an opening through which the connecting lug of the wire terminal protrudes.

2-24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the wire terminal exhibits a generally octagonal outline with two opposing longer sides, two shorter sides

orthogonal to the longer sides, and diagonal sides situated between the longer and shorter sides, and wherein the ~~at least one~~ holder includes a corresponding octagonal locating space for accommodating the wire terminal.

26. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the contact lips are generally aligned with the diagonal sides of the wire terminal.

27. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the through-channel runs in a straight line through the wire terminal.

28. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the wire terminal is accommodated releasably in the holder.

29. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the device includes a number of wire terminals corresponding to at least a number of wires to be branched.

30. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the contact lips are provided in pairs in each case on a wire terminal.

31. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 30, wherein the spacing between two paired contact lips is less than or equal to the diameter of a wire to be connected to the wire terminal.

32. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 30, wherein the edges of paired contact lips facing the through-channel run parallel to one another at least in sections.

33. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 30, wherein two paired contact lips together form an entry section for the wire, with a spacing between the contact lips widening towards an entry side of the through-channel.

34. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein a notch is provided between the wire terminal and its holder.

35. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the holder of the wire terminals is attached releasably to the housing.

36. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, further comprising multiple wire terminals and a common holder for all of the wire terminals.

37. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, further comprising at least one common holding-down clamp for all wires.

38. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the holding-down clamp represents a closure of the openings formed between the contact lips.

39. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the holding-down clamp can be latched to the holder of the wire terminal.

40. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the holding-down clamp can be latched to the housing.

41. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein seals are provided on the housing at the outlets for the line.

42. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 41, wherein the seals are formed as sealing rings with a side cut for inserting the line.

43. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein the housing is assembled from a housing base section and a housing upper section.

44. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 43, wherein the housing base section and the housing upper section can be screwed together.

45. (Previously Presented) A branching device according to claim 1, wherein strain relief is provided on the housing at the outlets for the lines.